

Secretary Says She Destroyed Hoover Letters on His Orders

WASHINGTON, Dec. 1 (UPI)—J. Edgar Hoover's secretary testified today that, following his orders, she destroyed his personal correspondence after the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation died.

"I can give you my word," said Helen W. Gandy, Mr. Hoover's secretary for 50 years. "I know what there was—letters to and from friends, personal friends, a lot of letters."

Miss Gandy appeared before a House Subcommittee on Government Information and Individual Rights studying F.B.I. harassment of the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., that was documented two weeks ago by a Senate committee.

In subsequent testimony, William C. Sullivan, former assistant director of the F.B.I., said in a taped interview played before the subcommittee that Mr. Hoover had once told him of derogatory information on a "highly placed" individual who "was engaged in some very, very reprehensible conduct."

It was not made clear if the correspondence referred to by Miss Gandy comprised files described by Mr. Sullivan.

But Mr. Sullivan said Mr. Hoover's personal correspondence could deal with official business, "with a Cabinet officer, or misconduct of some other person highly placed, or it could deal with certain political considerations."

He said Mr. Hoover had called him when Hubert H. Humphrey was running for the Presidency in 1968 and said he had learned that if Mr. Humphrey won he would dismiss Mr. Hoover as F.B.I. director.

Mr. Sullivan said Mr. Hoover had told him, "I would like to have you find out for me whether it's true or not."

Mr. Sullivan said he had gotten in touch with a friend in Chicago who reported, "Humphrey laughed—'ridiculous,' he said . . . 'he isn't important to me.'"

Mr. Sullivan, reportedly forced out of the bureau by Mr. Hoover in the early 1970's, said the late director's filing system and other F.B.I. files were "a bucket of worms." He said he had seen some of Mr. Hoover's files and "they were just loaded."

Mr. Sullivan, who is in poor health, was interviewed by a committee staff member Nov. 7, at Bolton, Mass.

Miss Gandy said that after the F.B.I. director died May 2, 1972, Mr. Hoover's immediate successors confirmed his orders. She said she had then separated Mr. Hoover's personal files from F.B.I. files and



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Helen W. Gandy, formerly secretary to J. Edgar Hoover, testifying at a House hearing yesterday.

took them to his home. "I tore them up, put them in boxes and they were taken away to be shredded," she said.

"I have no reason to lie," Miss Gandy told the panel chairman, Representative Bella Abzug, Democrat of Manhattan. "I understand your concern."

"What? That there were other files?" Mrs. Abzug said, asking if there were letters about Dr. King.

"I doubt it very much," Miss Gandy replied. "There was no reason for it."

Queried on Other Letters

When asked if there were letters about other persons, including Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, Democrat of Minnesota, Miss Gandy said she could not remember, but doubted it.

Miss Gandy insisted that what she destroyed was personal correspondence—not bureau business. She agreed it might have had historic value, "but I had my instructions," she said.

She said Mr. Hoover had told her that he wanted his personal letters and files destroyed if he died in office, but all other documents were to go to his successor. When Mr. Hoover died, Clyde A. Tolson, his deputy and companion, was acting director for a few days.

Miss Gandy said Mr. Tolson had affirmed Mr. Hoover's orders. Shortly afterward, Mr. Tolson resigned from the F.B.I. Miss Gandy said that the next acting director, L. Patrick Gray 3d, had leafed through a few holders and was satisfied the material was personal before giving the same order: Destroy it. Mr. Tolson has since died, and Mr. Gray was not confirmed as F.B.I. director during the Watergate scandal.